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FEATURE

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CHADWICK BOSEMAN

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Black Entrepreneur Launches Historic First "African Pride Sneaker" in the History of America

Atlanta, GA — The sneaker industry has gone thru many evolutions over the past 30 years. From the emergence of global brands like Nike, Jordan, Adidas and Converse to high-end designer sneakers from Gucci, Armani to Polo, now the newest development in the sneaker business is the custom sneaker designed for organizations, schools, entertainers and celebrities. Sneakerscustom.com, based in metro Atlanta, is the new trendsetter.

Owned by entrepreneur Tariq Edmondson, Sneakerscustom.com is a new, innovative way to generate income for schools, organizations or anyone with aspirations of making their own sneaker brand. The first product launched is a beautiful black canvas sneaker with red & green trim that's an instant eye-catcher. Inspired by the design of the Converse Chuck Taylor, the Red, Black & Green sneaker is quickly becoming a favorite for conscious African-Americans in the USA, Caribbean and even the United Kingdom. "My inspiration came about a year and a half ago, I saw all of the other big sneaker companies, and thought that a sneaker product featuring the red, black and green would make an impact," Tariq explains.

The company has created an innovative distribution pipeline by selling direct to wholesalers and consumers via the website. The Sneakerscustom.com wholesale program features a low-cost system for other entrepreneurs to get involved in a fast growing business. The wholesale program offers 50 custom sneakers for \$1,000 USD. Each sneaker retails for \$40 USD, which allows the wholesaler to make a profit of \$20 USD per pair.

The potential for emerging niche markets to have their own custom sneaker is unlimited. Within a few months, all types of organizations have made requests to create their own sneaker line. The Harambee Leadership Academy based out Columbus, Ohio made the Red, Black and Green sneakers the official sneakers for their school. Practicing the principles of Ujima, which means "cooperative economics" Sneakerscustom.com will empower anyone who has the aspiration of being an entrepreneur. We're helping to empower organizations in the community with our sneakers, which in turn generates income and pride back to the community," says Tariq.

The first sneakers were officially released in are available globally thru the website and from authorized wholesalers. "This is the new way to reach niche consumers I've been collecting sneakers for over 20 years and like the Red, Black and Green sneakers with the Africa logo on the side... I plan to join the team and become a wholesaler," says Brian Lassiter, entrepreneur and sneaker collector. Always on the cutting edge, Sneakerscustom.com has several new sneaker designs ready for Spring 2016. To learn more about their line of products visit www.sneakerscustom.com or connect with them on Facebook and Twitter.

About Sneakerscustom.com Sneakerscustom.com designs, manufactures and distributes custom sneakers and athletic footwear for men and women. Started in 2015, consumers can order direct from the company website or become authorized wholesalers. To order wholesale, visit www.sneakerscustom.com/products/rbgs.

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-Atlanta-based entrepreneur, Tariq Edmondson, generates a worldwide buzz with his custom designed sneakers -

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All Tied Up

all tied up

Workshops designed to create systemic changes that will
empower our youth.

At the heart of the All Tied Up philosophy is the belief that if you dress like a professional, you're more likely to act like a professional and that first impressions are powerful statements.

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It is no secret that men of color face unique challenges and are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. Expectations, beliefs and bias play a significant role in the success and can oftentimes interfere with learning and progress. Societal

stereotypes and disparities in resources prevent young men of color from reaching their full potential. With this in mind, we strive to close the gap in opportunity by increasing the availability of resources, create transformative experiences and give a strong sense of readiness to disadvantaged youth. We refuse to accept the status quo and will continue our strategic approach to promote better outcomes.

Please support our efforts to make our community stronger and more prosperous by making a financial gift today.

visit www.alltiedup.org

The effects of mentoring on youth, their health and their future are profound:

- 98% avoided gang participation;
- 85% did not use drugs;
- 98% did not become a teen parent; and
- 98% stayed in school

Real Talk

African-American Consumers; The Untold Story

Vibrant and growing in affluence, the African-American consumer is also increasingly diverse. As established African-American consumers enter their prime earning years and younger consumers make gains in education, the overall picture of the African-American community in the U.S. is one of rising influence, income and social empowerment. This trend is further bolstered by increasing immigration into the U.S. of educated and affluent Blacks from Africa, the Caribbean and other areas. The confluence of upwardly mobile African-Americans and Black immigrants, and how they are transforming the economic, social and cultural future of this country, is the untold story of Black consumers in America and the central theme of this report. The increasing cultural diversity of U.S. Blacks mirrors changes in the new American mainstream.

Multicultural consumers already make up 38% of the U.S. population, with Census projections showing that multicultural populations will become a numeric majority by 2044.

A significant part of that growth comes from the African-American community, including a rising share of the Black population who are foreignborn. These demographic trends are bolstering the buying power and influence of the African-American community, and marketers, advertisers and providers of goods and services need to adjust strategies to reach and communicate in a meaningful way with this growing and influential segment.

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AMERICAN ACADEMY of DERMATOLOGY | ASSOCIATION

African-American Hair: Tips for Everyday Care!

Unique in appearance and structure, African-American hair is especially fragile and prone to injury and damage. More than half of African-American women will cite thinning hair or hair loss as their top hair concern.

Fortunately, there is a lot African-Americans can do to help minimize damage and keep their hair beautiful. To help African-Americans keep their hair healthy, dermatologists recommend the following tips:

1. Wash hair once a week or every other week:

This will help prevent build-up of hair care products, which can be drying to the hair.

2. Use conditioner: Use conditioner every time you wash your hair. Be sure to coat the ends of the hair with conditioner, as the ends are the oldest and most fragile part of your hair.

3. Use a hot oil treatment twice a month:

This adds additional moisture and elasticity to your hair.

4. Use a heat protecting product before styling:

Adding this to wet hair before styling will help minimize heat damage.

5. Use caution with relaxers:

To minimize hair damage, always go to a professional hair stylist to ensure that the relaxer is applied safely. Touch-ups should only be done every two to three months and only to newly grown hair. Never apply relaxer to hair that has already been relaxed.

6. Use ceramic combs or irons to press hair:

If you would like to press or thermally straighten your hair, use a ceramic comb or iron and only do so once a week. Use a straightening device with a dial to ensure the device is not too hot. Use the lowest possible temperature setting that gives you the style you want. A higher temperature may be necessary for thicker, coarser hair.

7. Make sure braids, cornrows or weaves are not too tight: If it hurts while your hair is being styled, ask the stylist to stop and redo it. Pain equals damage.

See a board-certified dermatologist if you notice any changes in the texture or appearance of your hair. Even the slightest bit of noticeable thinning can be the start of hair loss. The earlier hair loss is diagnosed, the more effectively it can be treated.

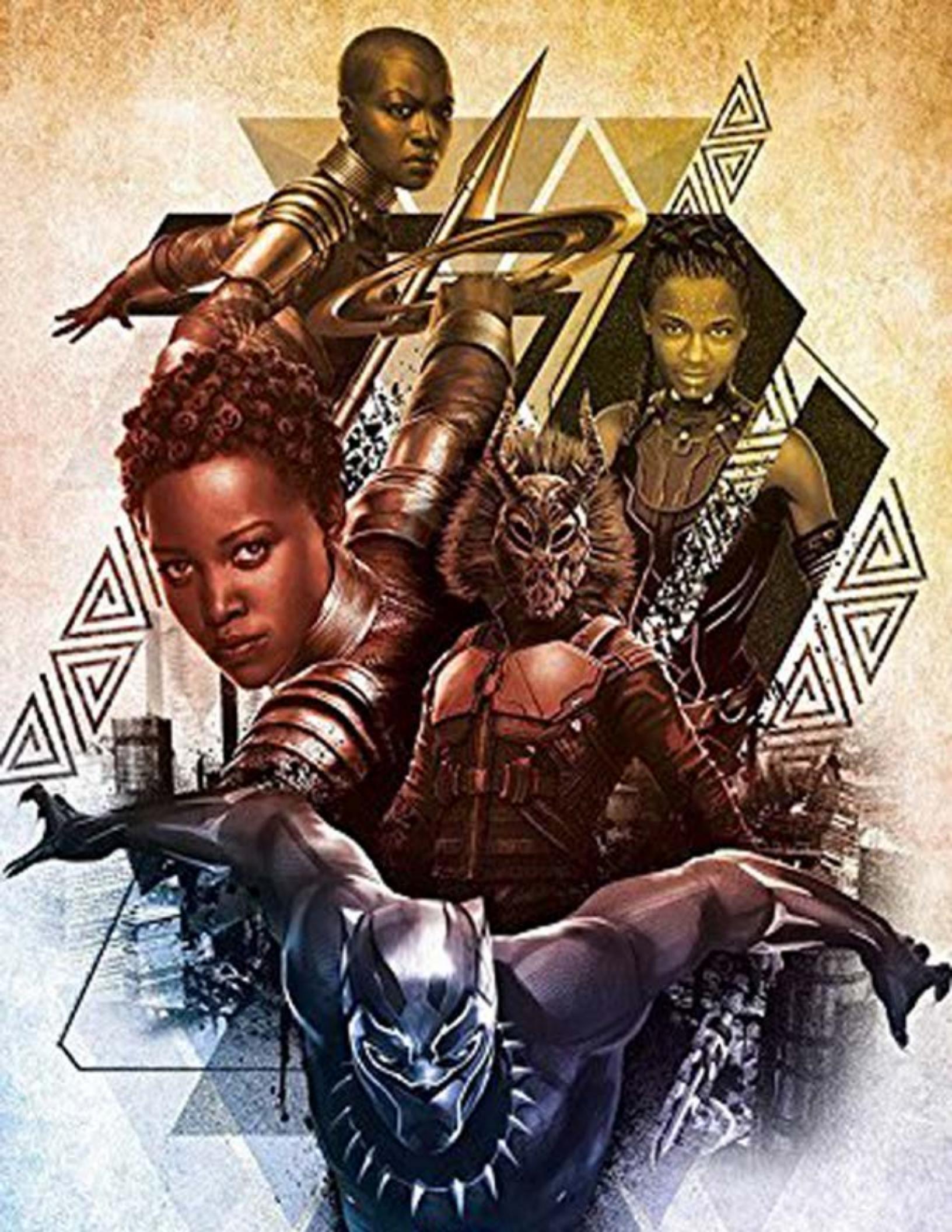




MARVEL STUDIOS

BLACK PANTHER

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The Revolutionary Power Of Black Panther

Marvel's new movie marks a major milestone
By JAMIL SMITH (as Cited in <http://time.com/black-panther/>)

The first movie I remember seeing in a theater had a black hero. Lando Calrissian, played by Billy Dee Williams, didn't have any superpowers, but he ran his own city. That movie, the 1980 Star Wars sequel *The Empire Strikes Back*, introduced Calrissian as a complicated human being who still did the right thing. That's one reason I grew up knowing I could be the same.

If you are reading this and you are white, seeing people who look like you in mass media probably isn't something you think about often. Every day, the culture reflects not only you but nearly infinite versions of you—executives, poets, garbage collectors, soldiers, nurses and so on. The world shows you that your possibilities are boundless. Now, after a brief respite, you again have a President.

Those of us who are not white have considerably more trouble not only finding representation of ourselves in mass media and other arenas of public life, but also finding representation that indicates that our humanity is multi-faceted. Relating to characters onscreen is necessary not merely for us to feel seen and understood, but also for others who need to see and understand us. When it doesn't happen, we are all the poorer for it.

This is one of the many reasons *Black Panther* is significant. What seems like just another entry in an endless parade of super-hero movies is actually something much bigger. It hasn't even hit theaters yet and its cultural footprint is already enormous. It's a movie about what it means to be black in both America and Africa—and, more broadly, in the world. Rather than dodge complicated themes about race and identity, the film grapples head-on with the issues affecting modern-day black life. It is also incredibly entertaining, filled with timely comedy, sharply choreographed action and

gorgeously lit people of all colors. "You have superhero films that are gritty dramas or action comedies," director Ryan Coogler tells TIME. But this movie, he says, tackles another important genre: "Superhero films that deal with issues of being of African descent." *Black Panther* features tense action sequences: "There was a point during the movie when my brother turned to me and said, 'What's gonna happen?'" Boseman says. "I looked at him like, 'Just watch the movie!'" *Black Panther* is the 18th movie in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, a franchise that has made \$13.5 billion at the global box office over the past 10 years. (Marvel is owned by Disney.) It may be the first mega-budget movie—not just about superheroes, but about anyone—to have an African-American director and a predominantly black cast. Hollywood has never produced a blockbuster this splendidly black.

The movie, out Feb. 16, comes as the entertainment industry is wrestling with its toxic treatment of women and persons of color. This rapidly expanding reckoning—one that reflects the importance of representation in our culture—is long overdue. *Black Panther* is poised to prove to Hollywood that African-American narratives have the power to generate profits from all audiences. And, more important, that making movies about black lives is part of showing that they matter. The invitation to the *Black Panther* premiere read "Royal attire requested." Yet no one showed up to the Dolby Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard on Jan. 29 looking like an extra from a British costume drama. On display instead were crowns of a different sort—ascending head wraps made of various African fabrics. Oscar winner Lupita Nyong'o wore her natural hair tightly wrapped above a resplendent bejeweled purple gown. Men, including star Chadwick Boseman and Coogler, wore Afrocentric patterns and clothing, dashikis and boubous. Co-star Daniel Kaluuya, an

Oscar nominee for his star turn in *Get Out*, arrived wearing a kanzu, the formal tunic of his Uganda ancestry. After the Obama era, perhaps none of this should feel groundbreaking. But it does. In the midst of a regressive cultural and political moment fueled in part by the white-nativist movement, the very existence of *Black Panther* feels like resistance. Its themes challenge institutional bias, its characters take unsubtle digs at oppressors, and its narrative includes prismatic perspectives on black life and tradition. The fact that *Black Panther* is excellent only helps.

Back when the film was announced, in 2014, nobody knew that it would be released into the fraught climate of President Trump's America—where a thriving black future seems more difficult to see. Trump's reaction to the Charlottesville chaos last summer equated those protesting racism with violent neo-Nazis defending a statue honoring a Confederate general. Immigrants from Mexico, Central America and predominantly Muslim countries are some of the President's most frequent scapegoats. So what does it mean to see this film, a vision of unmitigated black excellence, in a moment when the Commander in Chief reportedly, in a recent meeting, dismissed the 54 nations of Africa as "sh-t hole countries?"

As is typical of the climate we're in, *Black Panther* is already running into its share of trolls—including a Facebook group that sought, unsuccessfully, to flood the review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes with negative ratings of the film. That *Black Panther* signifies a threat to some is unsurprising. A fictional African King with the technological war power to destroy you—or, worse, the wealth to buy your land—may not please someone who just wants to consume the latest Marvel chapter without deeper political consideration. *Black Panther* is emblematic of the most

productive responses to bigotry: rather than going for hearts and minds of racists, it celebrates what those who choose to prohibit equal representation and rights are ignoring, willfully or not. They are missing out on the full possibility of the world and the very America they seek to make "great." They cannot stop this representation of it. When considering the folks who preemptively hate Black Panther and seek to stop it from influencing American culture, I echo the response that the movie's hero T'Challa is known to give when warned of those who seek to invade his home country: Let them try.

In June of that year, James Meredith, an activist who four years earlier had become the first black person admitted to Ole Miss, started the March Against Fear, a long walk of protest from Memphis to Mississippi, alone. On the second day of the march, he was wounded by a gunman. Carmichael and tens of thousands of others continued in Meredith's absence. Carmichael, who was arrested halfway through the march, was incensed upon his release. "The only way we gonna stop them white men from whuppin' us is to take over," he declared before a passionate crowd on June 16. "We been saying freedom for six years and we ain't got nothin'. What we gonna start sayin' now is Black Power!"

Activist Stokely Carmichael, at a 1966 rally in Berkeley, Calif., took a stand against white oppression and helped popularize the term black power. Black Panther was born in the civil rights era, and he reflected the politics of that time. The month after Carmichael's Black Power declaration, the character in Marvel Comics' *Fantastic Four* No. 52. Supernatural strength and agility were his main features, but a genius intellect was his best attribute. "Black Panther" wasn't an alter ego; it was the formal title for T'Challa, King of Wakanda, a fictional African nation that, thanks to its

exclusive hold on the sound-absorbent metal vibranium, had become the most technologically advanced nation in the world.

It was a vision of black grandeur and, indeed, power in a trying time, when more than 41% of African Americans were at or below the poverty line and comprised nearly a third of the nation's poor. Much like the iconic Lieutenant Uhura character, played by Nichelle Nichols, that debuted in *Star Trek* in September 1966, Black Panther was an expression of Afrofuturism—an ethos that fuses African mythologies, technology and science fiction and serves to rebuke conventional depictions of (or, worse, efforts to bring about) a future bereft of black people. His white creators, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, did not consciously conjure a fantasy-world response to Carmichael's call, but the image still held power. T'Challa was not only strong and educated; he was also royalty. He didn't have to take over. He was already in charge. "You might say that this African nation is fantasy," says Boseman, who portrays T'Challa in the movie. "But to have the opportunity to pull from real ideas, real places and real African concepts, and put it inside of this idea of Wakanda—that's a great opportunity to develop a sense of what that identity is, especially when you're disconnected from it."

The character emerged at a time when the civil rights movement rightfully began to increase its demands of an America that had promised so much and delivered so little to its black population. Fifty-two years after the introduction of T'Challa, those demands have yet to be fully answered. According to the Federal Reserve, the typical African-American family had a median net worth of \$17,600 in 2016. In contrast, white households had a median net worth of \$171,000. The revolutionary thing about Black Panther is that it envisions a world not devoid of racism but one in which black people have the wealth, technology and military might to level the playing

field—a scenario applicable not only to the predominantly white landscape of Hollywood but, more important, to the world at large.

The Black Panther Party, the revolutionary organization founded in Oakland, Calif., a few months after T'Challa's debut, was depicted in the media as a threatening and radical group with goals that differed dramatically from the more pacifist vision of civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and Lewis. Marvel even briefly changed the character's name to Black Leopard because of the inevitable association with the Panthers, but soon reverted. For some viewers, "Black Panther" may have undeservedly sinister connotations, but the 2018 film reclaims the symbol to be celebrated by all as an avatar for change.

The urgency for change is partly what Carmichael was trying to express in the summer of '66, and the powers that be needed to listen. It's still true in 2018.

Moviegoers first encountered Boseman's T'Challa in Marvel's 2016 ensemble hit *Captain America: Civil War*, and he instantly cut a striking figure in his sleek vibranium suit. As Black Panther opens, with T'Challa grieving the death of his father and coming to grips with his sudden ascension to the Wakandan throne, it's clear that our hero's royal upbringing has kept him sheltered from the realities of how systemic racism has touched just about every black life across the globe.

The comic, especially in its most recent incarnations as rendered by the writers Ta-Nehisi Coates and Roxane Gay, has worked to expunge Eurocentric misconceptions of Africa—and the film's imagery and thematic material follow suit. "People often ask, 'What is Black Panther? What is his power?' And they have a misconception that he only has power through his suit," says Boseman. "The character is existing with power inside power."

Coogler says that Black Panther, like his

previous films—including the police-brutality drama *Fruitvale Station* and his innovative *Rocky* sequel *Creed*—explores issues of identity. “That’s something I’ve always struggled with as a person,” says the director. “Like the first time that I found out I was black.” He’s talking less about an epidermal self-awareness than about learning how white society views his black skin. “Not just identity, but names. ‘Who are you?’ is a question that comes up a lot in this film. T’Challa knows exactly who he is. The antagonist in this film has many names.”

That villain comes in the form of Erik “Killmonger” Stevens, a former black-ops soldier with Wakandan ties who seeks to both outwit and beat down T’Challa for the crown. As played by a scene-stealing Michael B. Jordan, Killmonger’s motivations illuminate thorny questions about how black people worldwide should best use their power.

In the movie, Killmonger is, like Coogler, a native of Oakland. By exploring the disparate experiences of Africans and African Americans, Coogler shines a bright light on the psychic scars of slavery’s legacy and how black Americans endure the real-life consequences of it in the present day. Killmonger’s perspective is rendered in full; his rage over how he and other black people across the world have been disenfranchised and disempowered is justifiable. Coogler, who co-wrote the screenplay with Joe Robert Cole, also includes another important antagonist from the comics: the dastardly and bigoted Ulysses Klaue (Andy Serkis). “What I love about this experience is that it could have been the idea of black exploitation: he’s gonna fight Klaue, he’s gonna go after the white man and that’s it—that’s the enemy,” Boseman says. He recognizes that some fans will take issue with a black male villain fighting black protagonists. Killmonger

fights not only T’Challa, but also warrior women like the spy Nakia (Nyong’o), Okoye (Danai Gurira) and the rest of the Dora Milaje, T’Challa’s all-female royal guards. Killmonger and Shuri (Letitia Wright), T’Challa’s quippy tech-genius sister, also face off.

T’Challa and Killmonger are mirror images, separated only by the accident of where they were born. “What they don’t realize,” Boseman says, “is that the greatest conflict you will ever face will be the conflict with yourself.” Both T’Challa and Killmonger had to be compelling in order for the movie to succeed. “Obviously, the superhero is who puts you in the seat,” Coogler says.

“That’s who you want to see come out on top. But I’ll be damned if the villains ain’t cool too. They have to be able to stand up to the hero, and have you saying, ‘Man, I don’t know if the hero’s going to make it out of this.’” “If you don’t have that,” Boseman says, “you don’t have a movie.”

On set, Coogler works with star Gurira. “*Black Panther* is about a guy who works with his family and is responsible for a whole country,” he says. “That responsibility doesn’t turn off.”

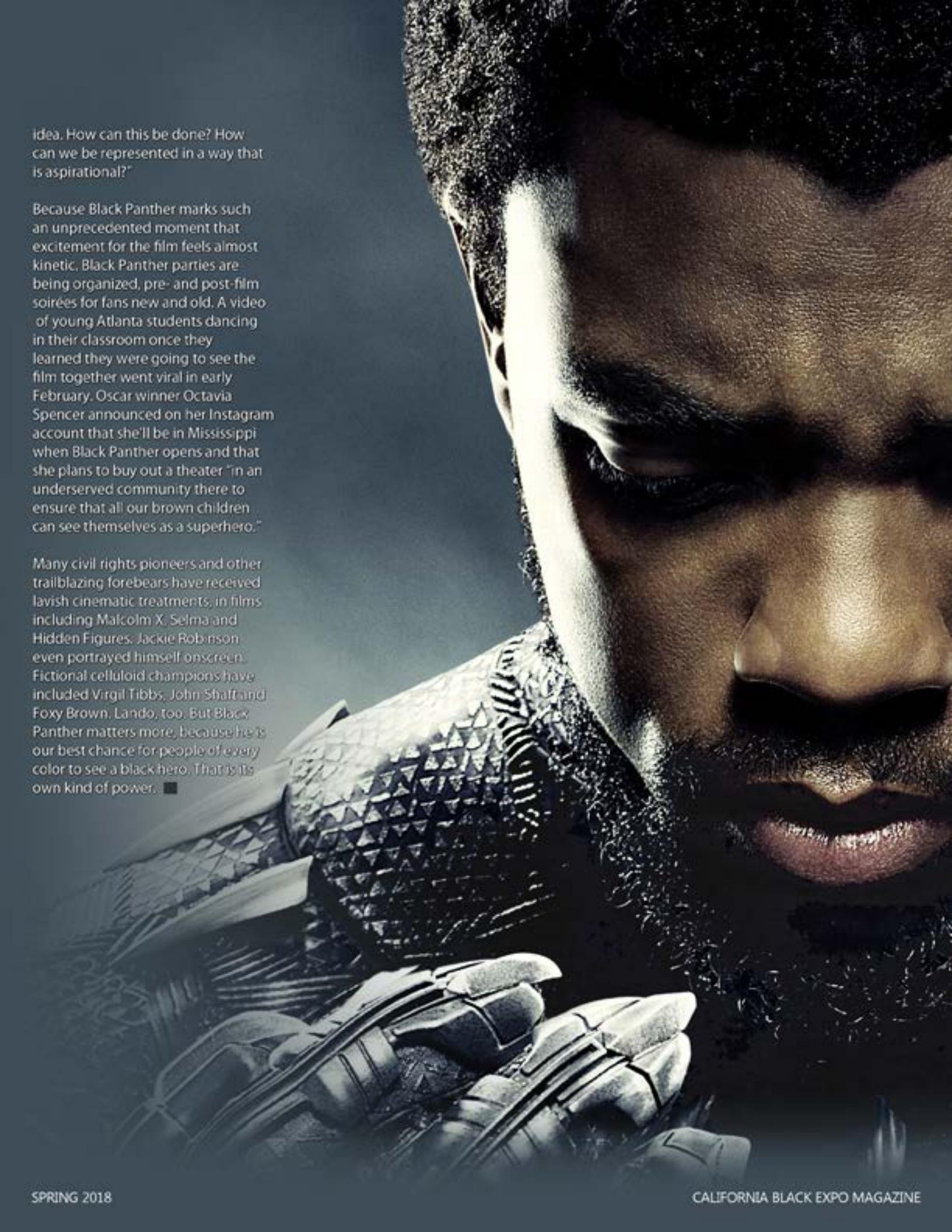
This is not just a movie about a black superhero; it’s very much a black movie. It carries a weight that neither Thor nor Captain America could lift: serving a black audience that has long gone under-represented. For so long, films that depict a reality where whiteness isn’t the default have been ghettoized, marketed largely to audiences of color as niche entertainment, instead of as part of the mainstream. Think of Tyler Perry’s *Madea* movies, Malcolm D. Lee’s surprise 1999 hit *The Best Man*, the *Barbershop* franchise that launched in 2002. But over the past year, the success of films including *Get Out* and *Girls Trip* have done even bigger business at the box office, led to commercial acclaim and minted new stars like Kaluuya and Tiffany Haddish. Those two hits have only bolstered an argument that has persisted since well

before Spike Lee made his debut: black films with black themes and black stars can and should be marketed like any other. No one talks about Woody Allen and Wes Anderson movies as “white movies” to be marketed only to that audience.

Black Panther marks the biggest move yet in this wave: it’s both a black film and the newest entrant in the most bankable movie franchise in history. For a wary and risk-averse film business, led largely by white film executives who have been historically predisposed to greenlight projects featuring characters who look like them, *Black Panther* will offer proof that a depiction of a reality of something other than whiteness can make a ton of money.

The film’s positive reception—as of Feb. 6, the day initial reviews surfaced, it had a 100% rating on Rotten Tomatoes—bodes well for its commercial prospects. *Variety* predicted that it could threaten the Presidents’ Day weekend record of \$152 million, set in 2016 by *Deadpool*. Some of the film’s early success can be credited to Nate Moore, an African-American executive producer in Marvel’s film division who has been vocal about the importance of including black characters in the Marvel universe. But beyond Wakanda, the questions of power and responsibility, it seems, are not only applicable to the characters in *Black Panther*. Once this film blows the doors off, as expected, Hollywood must do more to reckon with that issue than merely greenlight more black stories. It also needs more Nate Moores.

“I know people [in the entertainment industry] are going to see this and aspire to it,” Boseman says. “But this is also having people inside spaces—gatekeeper positions, people who can open doors and take that

A dramatic, close-up profile of a Black Panther character's face and hand. The character has dark skin, short hair, and is wearing a textured, metallic gauntlet on his right hand. His gaze is directed downwards and to the left. The lighting is low-key, highlighting the contours of his face and the texture of the gauntlet.

idea. How can this be done? How can we be represented in a way that is aspirational?"

Because *Black Panther* marks such an unprecedented moment that excitement for the film feels almost kinetic, *Black Panther* parties are being organized, pre- and post-film soireés for fans new and old. A video of young Atlanta students dancing in their classroom once they learned they were going to see the film together went viral in early February. Oscar winner Octavia Spencer announced on her Instagram account that she'll be in Mississippi when *Black Panther* opens and that she plans to buy out a theater "in an underserved community there to ensure that all our brown children can see themselves as a superhero."

Many civil rights pioneers and other trailblazing forebears have received lavish cinematic treatments, in films including *Malcolm X*, *Selma* and *Hidden Figures*. Jackie Robinson even portrayed himself onscreen. Fictional celluloid champions have included Virgil Tibbs, John Shaft and Foxy Brown. Lando, too. But *Black Panther* matters more, because he's our best chance for people of every color to see a black hero. That is its own kind of power. ■

Enterprising BLACK Women Entrepreneurs



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Over the years, Dr. Bj, understood that she had to invest in herself and keep a positive mental attitude. The real estate business is not just selling and listing properties. It is consulting, advising and creating a space for clients to make an informed decision about what is arguably a major investment decision.

When the real estate market changed, the business of listing and selling became too difficult and Bj hadn't planned to work that hard. She decided to go back to teaching for a brief period but continued to work Real Estate with her client base as she worked on a referral basis.

After many years of listing and selling real estate, Dr. Bj began to hunger for a more generous piece of the pie, realizing that working for a broker, doing just enough deals to stay afloat was not enough. She was determined to increase her share of the market. She decided to get her Broker's License and establish her independent brokerage. As an independent broker, she is able to expand her reach to do property management, and leverage her knowledge of many aspects of real estate into investment opportunities.

Dr. Bj is an author, speaker and coach. She offers her speaking services to real estate organizations and is a motivational speaker for corporate firms and other organizations.

As an Independent Broker, she has enjoyed the freedom and flexibility to invest in a Buy, Fix and Flip Business, and create multiple streams of income. Today, Dr. Bj is passionate about Flipping Houses.

She continues to invest in herself, studying under such real estate greats as: Armando Montelongo, Robert Kiyosaki, and others.

She holds the following certifications in advance training:

- Domestic Land Development
- International Land Development
- Asset Protection and Tax Relief
- Wholesale Buying
- Commercial Real Estate
- Foreclosures
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Keynote Speaker | Empowerment Champion | Entrepreneur | Leadership Coach | Chaplain | Author

Dr. Bj Moore is an award winning, innovative leader with strong communication skills and an outstanding aptitude for developing collaborative partners. She is an effective public speaker, and a talented leader with an infectious smile and an engaging, magnetic personality who is comfortable in the political environment.

Her objective is to inspire, motivate, challenge and empower teachers, professors, corporate clients, students and truth seekers to use their innate gifts to transform their lives and sharpen their awareness stems from a long career teaching people from all walks of life, including entrepreneurs, educators, corporate leaders and high school students.

Dr. Bj understands very well the dire need for successful people to invest in themselves, and the necessity to keep a positive mental attitude. She has a passion for conscious evolution and shares the need for life visioning in her speeches, workshops, presentations, and classes. In addition to a lengthy career in Education, Bj is the Founder and CEO of Toltec Properties, a real estate brokerage firm established on the spiritual principles of the ancient Toltecs, who were known as "men and women of Knowledge".

Dr. Bj holds a Doctorate in Philosophy, two Masters Degrees, one in Education, and one in Metaphysics, two Bachelor Degrees and numerous certifications, Real Estate Broker's license. Dr. Bj is also an ordained, licensed Minister and Certified Chaplin.

Dr. Bj is the founder and CEO of Toltec Properties, Real Estate Brokerage, and Co Founder of ACmoore Financial Services.



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- ❖ Power of Motivation
- ❖ Power and Evolution of Mind

Dr. BJ Areas of Proficiency

- ❖ Real Estate
- ❖ Real Estate Investing
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WHO IS BEING EMPOWERED BY

You are truly and inspiration, not only as a mom but also in the anchored spiritual practice. I truly admire all that you are, and how openly you surrender to your process of evolution without holding anything back. You are fearless, and this gives me courage. ~ **Amarian**

Thank you for all that you are, you give and do on behalf of love, peace and joy in the world. ... living, moving and being as you reveal the infinite creativity, intelligence and joy that touches hearts and opens minds. ~ **Daaiyah**

You are a powerful being of light...may you continue to share your unique gifts and talents in wonderful and meaningful ways. Thank you for enduring, persevering, and conquering all that lay before you. ~ **Marilyn**

I appreciate your vision, perseverance and commitment to creating a meaningful and rich life. ... I am happy that you are making a difference in so many people's lives. ~ **Yael**

It is with an open heart and with deep gratitude I thank you for the time we've spent together on this planet. Your courage and fearless heart has gifted me the permission to live a life well-lived. ~ **Steve**

What an inspiring life you have had, challenges you overcame, how you rose up! But not only rose up, --- became a giver and lover of life, sharing your passion and your gifts those who most needed them, and also with everyone you met. ~ **Mara**

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Dr. Diva Verdun, PhD

Keynote Speaker | Empowerment Guru | Author | Leadership Coach

Diva is a transformative speaker, author, coach, and entrepreneur with a passion to empower individuals to express the life of their dreams through intentional, and purposeful living. She shares an illuminating holistic message of Oneness embracing the principle of perfection, which is at the center of each person's being.

Her unique ability to captivate an audience using an enthusiastic and emotionally power packed inspirational style fires an immediate vibrational shift in consciousness. Her strategic method eliminates fear and negative self-talk through the unification of mind and soul to stimulate individuals to rise above life's daily challenges to live the life they dream.

Diva is the CEO of Fierce Impact - The Power of Feminine F.I.R.E. (TM), a global empowerment movement for women, and the Editorial Director for Today's Guru Magazine.

As Seen in:

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Sample Speaking Topics:

- Live Your Power and Master Your Life
- Live Your Power and Lead
- The Millionaire Consciousness
- Feminine Manifestation Model
- Selfish 101 – The Power of Self
- The Power of Challenges
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- Sex, Sex, Sex, Relationships, and More Sex

Diva is an expert in the areas of:

- Personal Transformation
- Self-Mastery
- Mindset Clearing
- Women in Leadership
- Overcoming Adversity
- Productivity
- Business & Career Development

"Dr. Verdun's mission, message and method of delivery is what the world needs today. Her Life Empowerment and Self-Mastery Training using entertainment, public speaking and traditional modalities for effective learning processes not only heals the soul and allows individuals to rise above the daily challenges of life;

Dr. Verdun's work allows you to live your power!"

~ Philippe Matthews, Host of The Philippe Matthews Show and Founder of the SHOCKwealth System Financial Destiny University Program

<http://drdivaphd.com> ~ 424-265-0535 ~ info@drdivaphd.com



Enterprising **BLACK** Women Entrepreneurs



Dr. Diva Verdun, Ph.D.

Keynote Speaker | Empowerment Guru | Author | Leadership Coach

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SPRING 2018

What Is a Courageous Woman?

By Dr. Diva Verdun

The struggle to define ourselves as women has been laborious since the rise of patriarchy in antiquity, which ostracized women through the manipulation of the story of Eve to curse women for the "Fall of Man". The true intent was to bring about the downfall of (Wo)man. With Eve's downfall the Divine Feminine was stripped out of the Holy Trinity, which has resulted in the imbalance of masculine power creating societal neurosis, and the war of the sexes.

Through patriarchy, women were degraded and considered the weaker sex here merely to serve the lusts of men; mere incubators for children. They were shunned for being courageous enough to stand up for their own rights and deemed a rebellious threat to patriarchal power.

Today, we see many of our ancestors and historical female figures as the most courageous women because they stood up for feminine rights. However, being courageous is not only the mantle of those that have achieved great feats against all odds during great adversity to stand in our history books. They are role models that represent the courageous heart that is inbred within every woman. You see, we are courageous by the mere fact that we chose to be born into the female experience.

Yes, we carry the emotional and psychological imprint from the pain suffered by our female counterparts, and yes, we stand courageously today against misogynistic powers that have crippled society into believing we are the weaker sex. However, on an individual basis we each have traversed hardship, trauma, tragedy, and grief to define ourselves individually and collectively as women.

The truth is that the courageous gene lies dormant within all women. It gives birth to the hysterical strength to lift an automobile off our children, the emotional endurance to become the head of our households after a devastating divorce, or the courage to overcome the shame and codependency of domestic violence.

It takes courage to stand in the face of a misogynistic system that strips us of our natural feminine power to govern our own bodies. It takes courage to raise children alone. It takes courage to educate ourselves and demand equal pay for equal work. It takes courage to shine the spotlight on sexual harassment. It takes courage to simply fight the daily fight to live in a misogynistic belief system that disempowers and degrades women.

Today, women all over the world are feeling the call to courageously rise and heal ourselves so that we can bring healing to our children, our men, and our nations. It takes true courage to face our own fears and stand in the light of our own feminine power. However, as we do we stand courageously together to heal our world as the emergence of the Divine Feminine energy rises to constitute a harmonious balance with the Divine Masculine to bring about peace, and love on the planet.

Thus, to define a courageous woman one merely need look into the face of anyone born female.

About Dr. Diva Verdun, PhD

Diva is a Spiritual Practitioner, and holds a Doctorate of Philosophy and dual Ministerial Ordinations. She is the CEO of Fierce Impact - The Power of Feminine F.I.R.E. (TM), a global empowerment movement for women, and the Editorial Director for Today's Guru Magazine.

Karen Allen

I am a Real Estate Professional.
My team services Sacramento to
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- Local real estate market reports
- Local real estate market expertise
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*Changing Lives
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Enterprising BLACK Women

Entrepreneurs



During Georgia's 15 years tenure as a Broker Owner, she also served on the Oakland Association of Realtors Board of Directors in early 1999 - 2010. She was installed as President of the Association in 2003 and served on various committees at the local, state and national levels. With all the responsibilities of managing her office and participating on the Realtor Association's leadership team, she was also a member and served on the Board of the Associated Real Estate Property Brokers (ARPB/Realtist). Among a few of her awards was the Realtor of the Year in 2008 and Realtist - Entrepreneur Broker of the Year in 2002. Even with all this real estate related activity, Georgia still took the time to get involved with coordinating Oakland's first City Wide Open House Bus Tour, which was the brainchild of Council Member Larry Reid, and his Political Analyst Ray Leon. She was also a supporter and advocate for the Oral Lee Brown Foundation, The Asomugha Foundation and other Non-Profit organizations. One of her most distinguished appointments was to the board of the Oakland, Alameda County Coliseum Authority. What was typically a 2 years appointment was extended to 5 years. Georgia has shown tremendous resilience and fortitude through the tragic loss of her husband of 35 years in 2004 and the down turn of the market which forced the closure of her office in 2010. She joined J. Rockcliff Realtors as a Broker Associate. Georgia was again challenged with making difficult change where her Medical Supply Company, founded by her late husband required her to step into the role of President/CEO of Broadline Medical, Inc. until its closure in Dec. 2016. Though this was a difficult pill to swallow, letting go of the legacy and business founded by her late husband Fred J. Richardson Jr., it allowed Georgia to return to her passion in real estate. Georgia has been no stranger to change and reinventing herself and utilizing her skills, knowledge and talents in new innovative ways. So what is this renaissance woman doing now? Georgia has made a smooth transition back into her real estate career. She has chosen to use her knowledge and wisdom obtained from over 30 years of real estate sales and management to help new agents launch their real estate career on a fast track, coaching seasoned agents who need help taking their business to the next level and serving as a real estate specialist and consultant to buyers and

sellers. Georgia also post Blogs that highlight real estate related issues and information. Please visit her site at gwrichardson.com and click on the link "Georgia Says". Georgia's most recent appointment was Real Estate Industry Advisor to the Dept. of Real Estate at Merritt College. She is using this role as a platform to prepare students preparing for their real estate license exam with information that will help them get a kickstart to starting their real estate careers. Guy Forkner, Real Estate Professor/Co-Chair of Business and Technology/Merritt College says this about Georgia: "Georgia Richardson and I have worked together many times on Community Projects and at Merritt College. She has given of her skills and knowledge generously to the students at Merritt College in both the Real Estate Department in the form of Guest Lectures and as an active participant in coaching our students through the S.W.O.T analysis to prepare their Business Plans and set their goals, as well as a Business and Real Estate Department Advisor. In addition to her coaching and lecturing, Georgia has joined EXP Realty the first Agent Owned, Cloud Based Real Estate Company Model. She is able to continue her pursuit of her Personal Coaching/Consulting and intends to provide a similar role to sales associates who join her team. This Cloud based real estate model offers solutions to many of the problems agents face regarding generating buyer/seller leads, a retirement plan and company stock incentives. Georgia says, I feel strongly that EXP Realty is ahead of the bell curve and leading the way to the future of how agents will transact and manage their real estate transactions. Agents will retain the lion share of their commissions and be provided technical support, online training and a community online Workplace where agents can share ideas, solutions and build a referral network. Georgia is positioning herself to be the Lead and Mentor for a Team of agents and collaborate with small brokerages who can use the EXP Platform to meet the challenges of increased cost. Access to success tools at a minimal start up and monthly fee can set a new pathway to success. Anyone interested in more details about Georgia's services or want to be a part of her Team Building please contact her at georgia@gwrichardson.com or 510.999.2797.

Enterprising BLACK Women Entrepreneurs

Georgia Richardson
Testimonies



"Georgia is a great Real Estate Coach, she really knows her stuff, she cares bout my success as a Real Estate Specialist, she takes the time to help me with not only setting my goals but the actions to take to achieve my goals. I was on social media but wasn't doing anything with it, Georgia taught me how to utilize social media, how to get my presence out there. She also taught me something that will help me to stand out with my sellers. Georgia has so much passion sharing her knowledge and experience. If you are ready to go to the next level in your Real Estate Career, give Georgia a try, you will not regret it"

- *Delores (Dee) Johnson*

"I can't thank Georgia enough for the immense help and wisdom she offered to me as I began my real estate career. Her coaching through the S.W.O.T analysis has allowed me to have a clear understanding of my current strengths and weaknesses going into real estate. This coaching also allowed me to map out an action plan for how to improve and open my eyes to other business opportunities I didn't previously think of. I feel truly blessed to be able to be coached by Georgia Richardson and be immersed in her wealth of knowledge. I would highly recommend her to anyone looking to get a head start in real estate or even make a breakthrough from wherever they are in their business."

- *Miles Tillman*

"Georgia Richardson and I have worked together many times on Community Projects and at Merritt College. She has given of her skills and knowledge generously to the students at Merritt College in both the Real Estate Department in the form of Guest Lectures and as an active participant in coaching our students through the S.W.O.T analysis to prepare their Business Plans and set their goals, as well as a Business and Real Estate Department Advisor.

While working with Georgia, I have seen her demonstrate many ideal qualities as a successful Real Estate Sales Executive/Coach. She has cultivated and mentored relationships with our real estate students as well as newly licensed and top producing agents, teaching the different aspects of the real estate process and business. She has always showed great patience assisting Brokers, Agents, Assistants, and Marketing Directors with training with various technological backgrounds. Her vast knowledge and resources offers a wealth of value to her clients. She has proactively shared valuable marketing strategies, products, industry knowledge, and has been very effective at problem solving in this unpredictable Real Estate market. She has demonstrated how to augment selling, exceptional customer service with marketing efforts, at a time when new business development is a priority.

Georgia's high level of professionalism has always shown bright within the community."

- *Guy Forkner, Real Estate Professor/Co-Chair of Business and Technology/Merritt College*

Enterprising BLACK Women



Reinvention – It Starts with Changing Yourself

BY SHONDA SCOTT

Just as the lyrics to the song that was made popular by Quincy Jones goes "Everything Must Change," yes, indeed everything must change. We accept that the seasons change, fashions change and even cars change. But one mention of changing one's self and the anxiety turns into fear, causing a feeling of mental paralysis that takes over your whole disposition.

For some reason the last thing most people want to do is change. But changing self is often the most important thing for us and the only thing we have control over. For those of us who are self-employed, changing self is sometimes more challenging than starting the business itself. As the employer, you feel as if you are the master of your universe: you re-engineer change for your company, hire and fire staff in the name of change- management. Yet you often miss the most pivotal change, which comes with changing self. If there is an adjustment to be made because something is going wrong or perhaps not as right as you'd like, guess what is the first thing that needs to change? That's right, the answer is YOU.

In life, and in business, if you want things to change you must start with the person you see every day in the mirror. It doesn't have to be drastic, it can be as subtle as changing how you see things. Often we overlook the little things in our lives as we wait for the big life altering, monumental shifts. We stop taking time to be grateful for the simple things like being able to continuously make payroll, for example, which has a huge impact on the lives of those who work for your company.

Being an employer means you have created an environment that enables others to thrive. You may

do it with ease but this is no small feat. According to the National Women's Business Council, there are 9.8 million women-owned businesses in the United States, and only 10.5% of those firms employ people other than themselves. Thus, you are in the top 10% if you have to meet a payroll. Now how does it feel that something you do so effortlessly is only being accomplished by 10% of your peers? Celebrating one's accomplishments as the head of their own business also can be the impetus for continued change.

Reinventing yourself is not just about changing when things are going wrong, it is about always evolving to create opportunities that can expand yourself and your business far beyond you can imagine. If you have been doing the same thing for the past five years, good or bad, it is time to change. If you have been doing the same routine, workout, regime in business or otherwise for the past five years, do something different. It can start with something minor like instead of taking the elevator every day, take the stairs. If you usually go to sleep on your business flights, on your next trip remain awake and take the time to meet the person sitting next to you. Your next business partner or a new friend might be sharing an armrest with you.

Recently, to avoid traffic and shorten my commute, I started taking the scenic route into the office. A simple route change allowed me to take time to appreciate the rolling hills and beautiful bay views, which I missed during my bumper to bumper freeway commute. Also, I now use my drive time to listen to inspirational messages instead of music or morning radio shows. Not only has this shift in my commute allowed me to arrive at my office feeling refreshed, inspired and less stressed, it has given me the chance to ponder new ideas for my business that have manifested additional revenue streams.

Enterprising **BLACK** Women Entrepreneurs

Shonda Scott

In 2006, CEO Shonda Scott created 360 Total Concept as part of the solution, providing program management services to organizations needing support in public relations, monitoring and contract compliance, logistics, and facilities management. 360 is headquartered in San Francisco/Bay Area with offices in Los Angeles and Washington D.C. as well.

Shonda Scott has nearly two decades of business experience that she leverages to assist clients with Turning Concepts into Reality. 360's client list is diverse, ranging from TV networks to federal agencies, school districts, and major corporations.

In 2012, Shonda was appointed to President Obama's Platform Committee. Based on her civic and community leadership, in 2006 Congresswoman Barbara Lee recognized Shonda as a CBC Young Leader.

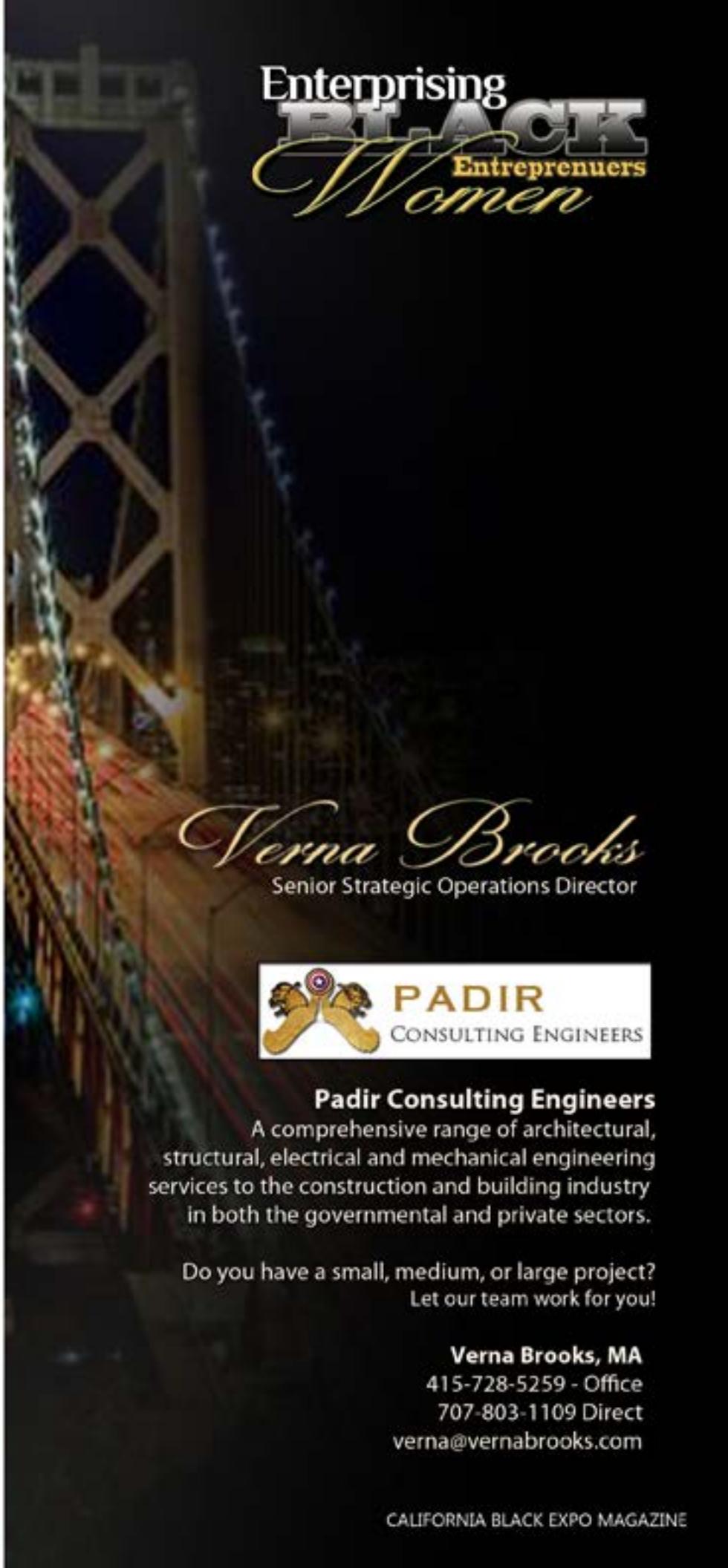
In addition to her entrepreneurial and civic work, Ms. Scott is the executive producer and host of a talk show "Spotlight with Shonda Scott," which highlights the positive stories in the Bay Area and features such guests as the City's Mayor, Ambassador Andrew Young, Congresswoman Barbara Lee many other officials and award winning entertainers.

Shonda holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science (with a business emphasis) from University of California, Los Angeles, and graduate studies at Holy Names University MBA program.

For more information on 360 Total Concept, please visit: 360tcpr.com.



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New Lots to Whiteplains

Urban tales of life in New York City

From the diary of James Paul Sr
(Part One)

The pace of New York City is palpable and shocking to first-time visitors from rustic, slower parts of the country and world; especially on workdays. Keep up or get out the way. It's the determined pace of people chasing dollars, dreams and a bigger slice of a juicy red fruit that symbolizes the aspirational essence of the city. Call it 'fast'. Call it 'rude'. Call it 'loud'. But don't you ever call it 'soft'. Not this city of 'Iron' Mike Tyson, John 'Teflon-Don' Gotti, Malcolm X and Jay-Z. Not this storied birthplace of hip hop and break-dancing, where it's "blacker than midnight on Broadway and Myrtle" [i]; where poets, pimps and politicians ride subway trains from New Lots to Harlem; where Jackie Robinson broke the color line at Brooklyn's Ebbets Field; and Sean 'Puff Daddy' Combs flipped an internship at Uptown Records into a billion on Wall Street.

Today, I'm chasing a few hundred in commission at Nordstrom's in White Plains, a mixed shopping and residential city in the suburbs of Westchester county, about twenty-eight miles north of Manhattan. It's roughly a two-hour commute from

Brooklyn – thirty minutes on foot; sixty on three different trains; plus another thirty as cushion in case stuff happens. And shit always happens in New York. Yeah, I know you're thinking, that's a pretty long ride for a few hundred bucks, or significantly less, if business is really slow in Men's Clothing at Nordy's. But a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do. Bills and the landlord don't give a fuck where you work as long as they get paid. They don't care that you have an MBA or PHD and can't find a better job cause the economy stinks. So you suck it up; put on your Winter gear and schlep it through ice, sleet, snow and that omnipresent stream of hustlers peddling everything from mixed-cds to salvation. Cause that's what New Yorkers do. We don't waste time whining. We stay on the grind until we find that dream gig, like Diddy.

I leave the crib on Atkins promptly at 5:45 am and walk several blocks to the first (and last) stop of the #3 train – New Lots Avenue. It's the morning

after a nasty Sunday snow storm that dropped five inches on rooftops, parked cars, streets and sidewalks. It's freaking cold. Single digit cold. With a wind chill of minus ten. Brrrrr ... Yup. It's definitely a day for the full Winter gear – waterproof boots, scarf, gloves, thermals, multiple layers and the big fleece coat with faux-fur on the hood. Alternate-side-of-the-street parking is suspended indefinitely. A few residents shovel snow off stoops and driveways. Some clear paths on the sidewalk and around parked cars, sprinkling rock salt to aid traction. A fat black stray cat scampers across Atkins near the stop sign, right in front of me; awakening my superstitions. I slow down and look around. This is the corner where fat-ass hookers in heels hang out late at night, even in the chill of Winter; and you'd better believe that strapped pimp with a short fuse isn't far away. You learn to stay alert in the hood.

It's dark and damp and yes, cold. It's worth repeating. The streets lights are still on. Dawn and the Sun are an hour away. I shuffle along, making



short, safe steps on the makeshift path of footprints made by pedestrians ahead of me. I see my breath in the air; white cloudy puffs of condensation. My thoughts flash momentarily on that hot cup of coffee and cinnamon raisin bagel awaiting me at my favorite deli at Grand Central Station; two trains away, but worth the wait.

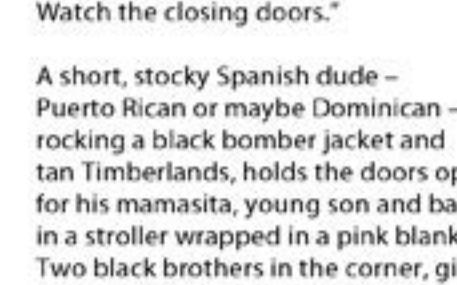


I pick up a copy of The Daily News from the corner store next to the stairs rising thirty feet to the elevated station over New Lots Avenue. The young man behind the counter has a thick Indian accent. "Anything else bossman? Coffee? Donut?" "Nah. I'm good," I reply, grabbing my change.

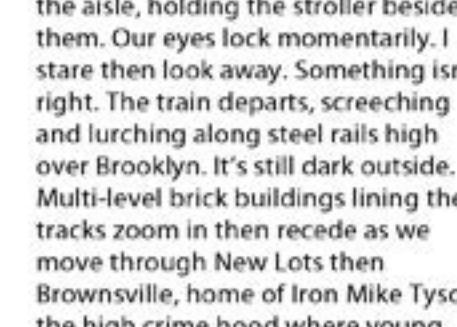


I never quite got around to eating breakfast items from corner stores in the hood. Call me picky. Call me a germaphobe. I don't care. But Sunil, Abdul or Jose – yeah, it seems like all the corner joints in East New York are owned and operated by East Indians, Arabs or Hispanics. God bless 'em. They're good for my lotto tickets, scratch-offs, newspapers and candy, or even a six-pack if I'm desperate. But breakfast? ...I don't think so!

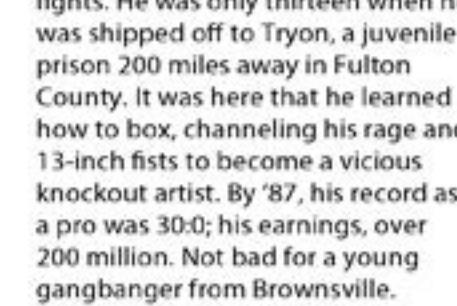
I run up the stairs, push through graffiti-stained doors and slide my Metro card at the turnstile. I join the small crowd huddled inside the warm tower, awaiting the arrival of the train on the platform above. I briefly scan the black and brown faces wrapped in scarves or under beanies and hoodies, making an extra effort not to stare. Everyone's in their own private zone, eyes glued to iPhones and Samsungs; heads bopping, wrapped in Beats by Dre or much cheaper knock-offs. These are the faces of Brooklyn; of New York. Faces wearing 'don't f... with me' expressions; a learned survival shield described as 'mean' by some, 'hard' by others. But they're just minding their business, New York style. Minutes later, the #3 train pulls into the terminal, triggering the morning rush to board and snag premium seats. Some commuters walk directly to the opposite side. They stand near the closed sliding doors, grasping overhead pivot handles and rails for support. They are well positioned for a quick exit and transfer



at Utica or Franklin to the Uptown #4. I join them, unzipping my coat, loosening my scarf. More commuters stream on board. A bell sounds and a female voice with a lilting Trini accent is heard over the intercom. "This is the number three train to Harlem 148 Street. Van Siclen Avenue next. Watch the closing doors."



A short, stocky Spanish dude – Puerto Rican or maybe Dominican – rocking a black bomber jacket and tan Timberlands, holds the doors open for his mama-sita, young son and baby in a stroller wrapped in a pink blanket. Two black brothers in the corner, give up their seats like gentlemen to the lady and her toddler.



"Thank you," she says politely and sits down. Her son climbs up next to her. Dad leans against a silver pole in the aisle, holding the stroller beside them. Our eyes lock momentarily. I stare then look away. Something isn't right. The train departs, screeching and lurching along steel rails high over Brooklyn. It's still dark outside. Multi-level brick buildings lining the tracks zoom in then recede as we move through New Lots then Brownsville, home of Iron Mike Tyson; the high crime hood where young Mike and his gang, the Jolly Stompers, cleaned out cash registers at gunpoint in the late 70's. By '79, Mike had been arrested more than 30 times for petty crimes and street fights. He was only thirteen when he was shipped off to Tryon, a juvenile prison 200 miles away in Fulton County. It was here that he learned how to box, channeling his rage and 13-inch fists to become a vicious knockout artist. By '87, his record as a pro was 30:0; his earnings, over 200 million. Not bad for a young gangbanger from Brownsville.

* I ain't a killer but don't push me / Revenge is like the sweetest joy next to gettin' chasing women... I recognize the lyrics of Tupac's Hail Mary. But the voice rapping out loud on the train had a Spanish accent. My roving eyes lock with the Spanish dude, again; the one holding the stroller. He glares back, head bobbing

under a black beanie with the white NY logo, and red beats. The right side of his face twitches involuntarily a few times. "This guy's crazy," I think to myself, averting my eyes, again.

Mamasita shifts uncomfortably in her seat. She hugs her son, pulling him closer to her side. They knew he's crazy too. "Now pay attention, rest in peace father / I'm a ghost in these killin' fields..." No one says a word to him. This is Brooklyn. Shit happens. The #3 train enters a dimly lit underground tunnel as we near Utica. Early rush hour is in full effect.

Utica, a subterranean station with Uptown and Downtown tracks, is jammed with commuters heading to work or school or wherever Brooklynites go on a train at 6:15 am on a cold Monday morning in January. The double doors slide open. Transfer riders rush out to catch the #4 Uptown, sitting on the tracks across the platform. The crazy Spanish dude and his crew are among them. A few passengers exchange glances, shaking their heads. Another wave of commuters squeeze on board the #3, including two bearded Hasidic men in long black coats and black wide-brim hats. 'We must be in Crown Heights,' I muse to myself. The doors close again and we're off. Franklin's just three stops away. I decide to transfer there to the #4. After a quick glance at the subway map on the wall, I continue reading my paper.

A casual observer would've noticed that prior to the entrance of the two Jewish men at Utica, all of the riders on the #3 to Harlem were black and brown, emblematic of the segregation that persists in large sections of Brooklyn. Neighborhoods that were predominantly white in the 50's and 60's. Neighborhoods from which whites fled in droves when black and brown people moved in. Government-aided white-flight depleted Brooklyn of a significant number of affluent white residents and contributed to the urban decay of the 70's and 80's.

Gentrification is bringing them back. The underground platform at Franklin

at Franklin is filled with white hipsters now. This is the Clinton Hill/ Bed-Stuy neighborhood where Christopher Wallace ran the streets dealing crack-cocaine, before he blew up as platinum-selling rapper, Notorious B.I.G. aka Biggie Smalls. Christopher and his Jamaican parents lived here in the 80's, at 226 St. James Place, apartment 3L. The monthly rent back then was \$750.

If Biggie were to experience Life After Death today, he would be blown away by the outrageous sixfigure price tag on the immaculate three-bedroom, one-bath, fully renovated luxury condo at 3L. That's the gentrification effect. It's rapidly transforming Brooklyn neighborhoods into the high-priced domain of rich, white hipsters, displacing poor and lower middle class black and brown tenants, many of whom were living there before Biggie was born in '72. Yeah Biggie, Things Done Change. I switch trains at Franklin, hopping on the Manhattan-bound #4 Lexington Avenue Express. It's also packed with commuters, an eclectic mix of ethnicities that truly reflects the raw, rich diversity of New York City. I overhear conversations in at least five different languages. Every layer of the labor force is represented here – janitors, judges, lawyers, librarians, clerks, CEO's, rappers, rabbis, doormen, doctors, professors, police officers, tellers, traders, engineers, electricians, scientists, and yes... salesmen. They may live in largely segregated neighborhoods, or worship in largely segregated churches, mosques and synagogues, but on this train, on this cold morning in January, they are all New Yorkers chasing dollars, dreams and a bigger slice of The Big Apple. A blur of white tiles, hanging signs and faces flash by as the train accelerates to speeds over 30 mph, bypassing local stations under Downtown Brooklyn.

My digital watch flashes 6:25 am. We are about to enter one of the great engineering marvels of the world – the Joralemon Street Tunnel (formerly the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel) under the East River. It took four long years – 1903 to 1907 – to build this spectacular subterranean connector between

Brooklyn and Manhattan, through which a million people travel daily and most take for granted. But to this immigrant from a poor Third-World nation with floating bridges and horse-drawn carts – this tunnel is, in a word, amazing! (to be cont.) James Paul Sr. is a free-lance writer and author of 'Kneeling For Justice' <http://www.jamesgpaulsr.com>

Works Cited: [i] Mos Def lyric from his 'Mathematics' album.



Author Bio: Hi there, My name is James Paul Sr. My friends, over the years, have called me JP or Pablo (pick one). I'm a creative dabbler, poet and author of few books - Kneeling For Justice, Behcet's In Black, etc.

I love words and writing about random stuff or issues I care about like racism, oppression, homelessness, social justice, black consciousness, poverty, soccer, health, fitness, veganism, New York, Guyana, Africa, love, family, travel and technology.

I channel my diverse life experiences in the Caribbean (I was born in Guyana), Europe (I studied in Poland) and the US, to enrich my muse.

I apologize in advance, for the random profanity in some of my joints - I lived and worked in New York for a few decades so that urban edge is a part of who I am as an artist. McDonough, GA (a suburb of Atlanta) is my current hometown. I live in an old sub-division with tall trees, deer and a few red-necks. ■



ICA Fund good jobs.



About The Collaborative

This collaborative of nonprofit community development financial institutions (CDFIs) – Working Solutions, Pacific Community Ventures, ICA Fund Good Jobs – are long standing economic and community builders of small business in the San Francisco Bay Area. Now, with support from JPMorgan Chase, we can deepen our services and outreach.

Through this partnership, we aim to create a continuum of capital and consulting to support small businesses run by entrepreneurs of color at every stage of their business.

San Francisco Entrepreneurs of Color Fund

Creating Opportunities for Communities of Color

Working Solutions, ICA Fund Good Jobs, and Pacific Community Ventures are partnering with JPMorgan Chase to launch the Entrepreneurs of Color Fund in San Francisco. This initiative aims to make capital and business consulting more accessible to people of color who are starting or growing businesses in San Francisco.

Loans start at \$5,000 and range upwards along a continuum of capital and investments. Funds can be used for all stages of business development from purchasing inventory to funding business growth and addressing cash flow needs. Get started by clicking on your stage of business, below.

- For start-up and early-stage loans from \$5,000-\$50,000
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Contact Pacific Community Ventures. <http://www.pacificcommunityventures.org/>
- For growth capital investments starting at \$250,000
Contact ICA Fund Good Jobs. <http://icafundgoodjobs.org/>

Additional Details about the San Francisco Entrepreneurs of Color Fund

Access to Capital

Every day, 8,000 small business loan requests are declined by banks across the nation. Here in California, people of color are three-times more likely to start a small business, and they are three-times as likely to be turned down for loans by a bank. (<http://www.blackenterprise.com/unmet-demand-in-denied-business-loans-tops-52-billion/>)

Small businesses combat rising income inequality by creating local jobs with living wages; and yet, small businesses struggle to access the capital and support they need to grow. The Entrepreneurs of Color Fund closes that gap with a range of services designed to support the growth, profitability, and sustainability of companies owned by people of color in San Francisco:

Early Stage (\$5K – \$50K) *Apply Now* <http://www.workingsolutions.org/pre-apply/>
Microloans for startups and early-stage businesses. Includes free pre- and post-loan consulting to help you prove your ideas and grow your business.

Growth Stage (\$200K – \$1M) *Apply Now* <https://www.pacificcommunityventures.org/small-business-loans/>
Hybrid capital investments for companies to scale. Includes ongoing advisory services to promote job creation, quality, and access.

Middle Stage (\$50K – \$200K) *Apply Now* <https://www.icafundgoodjobs.org/join-entrepreneurs>
Loans and working capital to help you grow, thrive and succeed. Includes free one-on-one expert advice on any business challenge or topic.

Access to Mentoring and Consulting

Entrepreneurs need more than a check to be successful over the long haul, and the Entrepreneurs of Color Fund pairs the right capital with the right business advice – whether it's through pre-loan support and application guidance, to post-loan support and technical assistance – to support business growth and long-term sustainability.

Business Mentoring *Learn More* <https://www.workingsolutions.org>
Free, confidential and ongoing one-on-one advice from a network of thousands of business experts.

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African American Millennials in the Workplace are More Inclined to Use the Free Agent Option to Advance Their Career

By Lee E. Meadows, Ph.D, Human Resource Consultant

Nationwide — The concept of freedom is not lost on anyone who spends time thinking about their range of options, but for African American millennials in the workplace, the exercise of freedom is elevated and broadened by a mindset of career-movement-through-free agency-as-opposed-to-hierarchy. As an organizational consultant/leadership coach, I am privy to many conversations, observations and surface research on the patterns of African American millennials as they move through organizational cubicles and corridors in search of the unrestricted path to their career aspirations.

In doing so, what I have observed is an unwillingness to endure the tricks and taunts of a bygone era of 'wait and see' if your career has a chance here. While their predecessors were encouraged to take biases head on, bounce against the barriers with tenacity and remain loyal for a lifetime, I suspect it was the physical and mental strain of stress and duress, as seen on their faces, that moves this collection of millennials to consider other, less, toll taking options.

Preceding generations, generally, managed to build their careers by climbing the corporate ladder, one rung at a time, across a stretch of time in which the 30 to 40-year marathon ended with a gold watch and a retirement package that was strong enough to include not returning to work. It goes without saying that the organizational landscape of that era also masked a minefield that could derail a career. Once flung into this purgatory carb barrel, the only option left was to survive.

Legends were created and lives were lost. To merely survive and live to tell the story was considered a badge of honor and that was enough. My conversations with some of the 11.5 million African American millennials who are working their way through the new social media hierarchical landscape reveal a much different way of thinking about the marathon.

For them, it is not enough to say, 40 years later, that 'I survived!' Their willingness to seek greener pastures is a testament to how the race has changed. While I have, humorously, coined the term 'Free Agentology' and define it as, 'the act of packaging and marketing a set of skills to an employer who is willing to pay above market value in order to gain a competitive edge to the extent that a contract binds the relationship together', these millennials don't view themselves as 'employees', but as skilled agents who achieve their status by being twice as skilled, but not staying twice as long. Wait-and-see is viewed as 'Wait-and-die' (direct quote from an African American millennial who switched jobs prior to this article), and 'loyalty is present at the place where I am present.' A Free Agent markets their skills to the highest bidder, knowing that, thanks to the growing span of entrepreneurial activities, the highest bidder could just be themselves! For African American millennials, the range of career/workplace options is augmented by the Talent Wars, the lack of strong Employee Engagement programs, bias built into the organizational culture, globalization, micro-aggressive scrutiny and leadership gaps that prevent advancement. I would argue that the process of relying on the

benevolent 'cradle-to-grave' trust-me-to-take-care-of-you organizational/social contract ended when this group felt the impact of the Enron-like bankruptcies, the housing market plunge, musical retail chairs and student debt that could see them using their Social Security to pay the remaining balance of their student loans. Free Agents can consider a full range of employment options because only having one option is too restrictive and provides less control over the outcome.

Any employer paying attention to social trends has to know that much of their Diversity and Inclusion initiatives, however well intended, will stall at recruitment if they don't make an effort to look at and change many of the internal cultural practices that restrict the career advancement of African American millennials and, by definition, broaden their Free Agent options to be 'anyplace but here'!

Lee E. Meadows, Ph.D is a Human Resource Consultant and the author of the leadership novel, "Take the Lull By the Horns! Closing the Leadership Gap," available on Amazon.

He can be contacted at
LeMeadows@comcast.net.

Featured Artist

LaDy-SN3AK

Shakeea Thomawn Smith, (a.k.a. LaDy-Sn3ak), is an entertainer, songwriter, promoter, and so much more from The Bay Area, CA.

Smith's unique voice, enthusiasm, and energy "sneaks up" on listeners when they least expect it! Her reputation as: "reserved with a powerful stage presence", and her love for sneakers led several community members to discovering her stage name!

Smith was born into a musically-gifted family. Her mother is a gospel singer and her father is a multitalented instrumentalist and vocalist. She was first introduced to music by her parents when she learned how to play the drums at home and sing at church. She began singing at age 2, dancing at age 7, and rapping at age 12. Her commitment to her craft is matched only by her work ethic.

Shakeea Thomawn Smith, the promoter began putting on events in the Bay Area back in 2014 and hasn't stopped ever since. She shouts out her former boss Hannah Kahl for helping her develop this craft. All of her events have been community minded and driven by positivity.

Originally influenced by recording artists such as: Beyoncé, Jasmine Sullivan, and Tupac Shakur; LaDy-Sn3ak draws inspiration from artists who have strong conviction in their ideas and beliefs. Her music transcends genres to include styles such as reggae, R&B, hip-hop, gospel and soul. Her work has been described as "brave and honest...that appeals to many audiences."

LaDy-Sn3ak aspires to release her debut album, tour internationally, and share her talents with other people in her community as an arts-educator and promoter.

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Featured Artist

Gene

Gene Murden is a Singer/Songwriter.
He came to Christ during an Alter Call
at The Late Andre Crouch concert.

The title "All of Me" was written to
be an inclusive album. My prayer
is that something is said to
bring a little hope to your life.

Paraphrasing Martin Luther King Jr.,
The question is not, "If I stopped
to help this man, what will
happen to me?"

The question is, "If I do not stop to
help this man, what will happen
to him?"

God Bless You!
~Gene



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Janet Jackson

**TO PLAY OUTSIDE LANDS,
ENDING 10-YEAR RUN
OF NO FEMALE HEADLINERS**

by Nastia Voynovskaya of KQED

Published on Mar 30

Janet Jackson performing in 2016 in the United Arab Emirate of Dubai. Janet Jackson has been announced as a performer at the 2018 Outside Lands festival in San Francisco. (KARIM SAHIB/AFP/Getty Images)

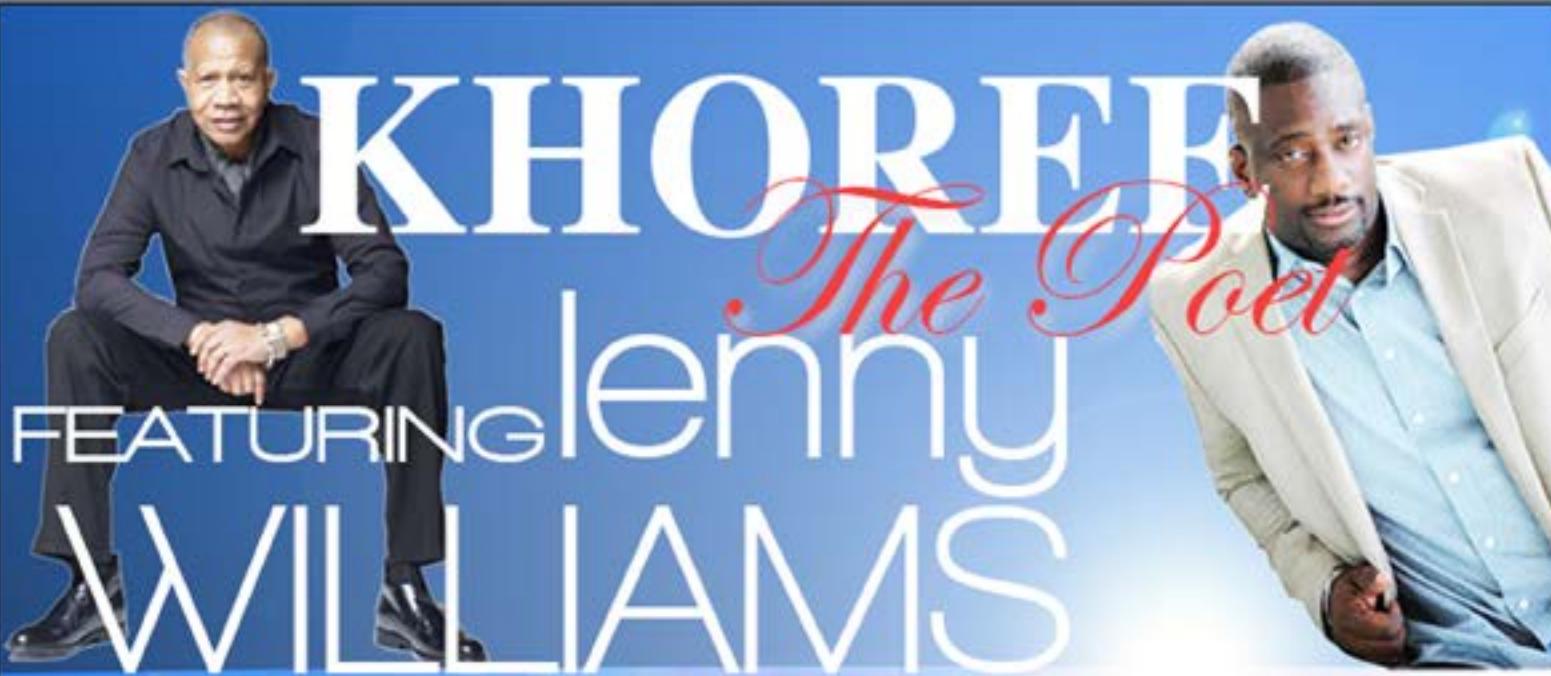
Year after year, fans and critics alike have asked the organizers of Outside Lands: Where are the female headliners? That question seemed to be answered today, with the festival's announcement on social media that Janet Jackson will take the stage at this year's Outside Lands, presumably in a headlining slot.

But booking Janet Jackson in 2018 is a case study in too little, too late: in the past 10 years, there have been no single female headliners at Outside Lands, an issue repeatedly raised in recent years by local music journalists. (*The full lineup announcement for this year's fest, taking place Aug. 10-12 in Golden Gate Park, is coming April 3 at 10am.*)

Allen Scott of Another Planet Entertainment, co-producers of Outside Lands, explained the lack of women headliners in a 2017 interview with Consequence of Sound, promising that his staff had diligently pursued female headliners, but that the "stars just haven't aligned yet." But with Outside Lands' ability to secure performances from in-demand male-fronted acts over the years — expensive acts like Radiohead, Kanye West, and Paul McCartney — it seems surprising that not a single woman was available to take a top spot on the lineup over the past decade.

Of course, with the ongoing #MeToo movement and a jarring lack of female winners at this year's Grammys, pressure for more inclusive festival lineups has reached a fever pitch. Earlier this year, 45 international music festivals pledged to have a 50/50 gender balance on their lineups by 2022. (Only two of the festivals that made the pledge are in the U.S.: A2IM Indie Week and NYC Winter Jazzfest.)

Janet Jackson might be the perfect person to usher in what will hopefully be a sea change at Outside Lands. After all, Jackson's career took a major hit after the "wardrobe malfunction" during her performance with Justin Timberlake at the 2004 Super Bowl. Fans were outraged when Timberlake was invited to perform at the Super Bowl again this year, while Jackson never recovered from the incident.



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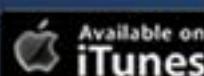
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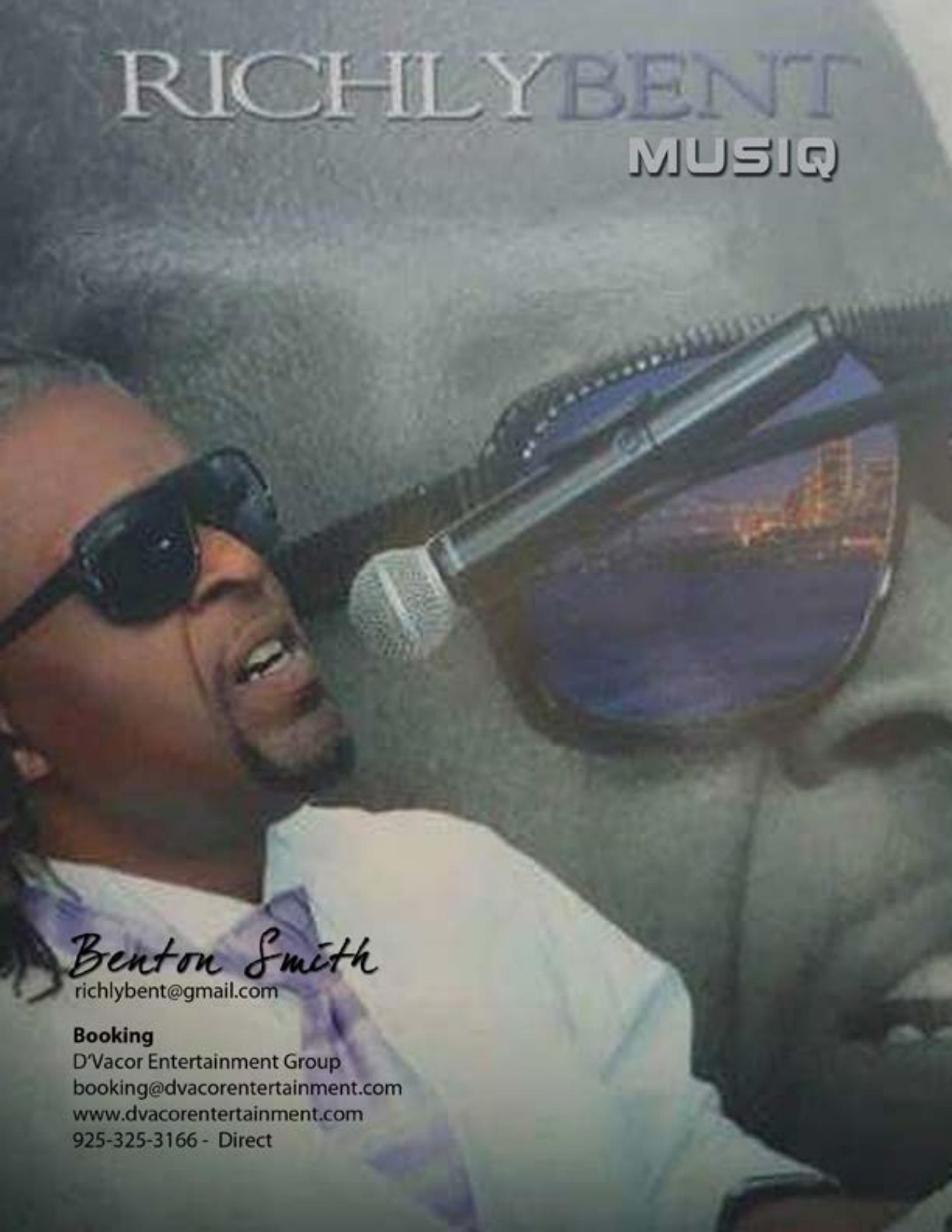
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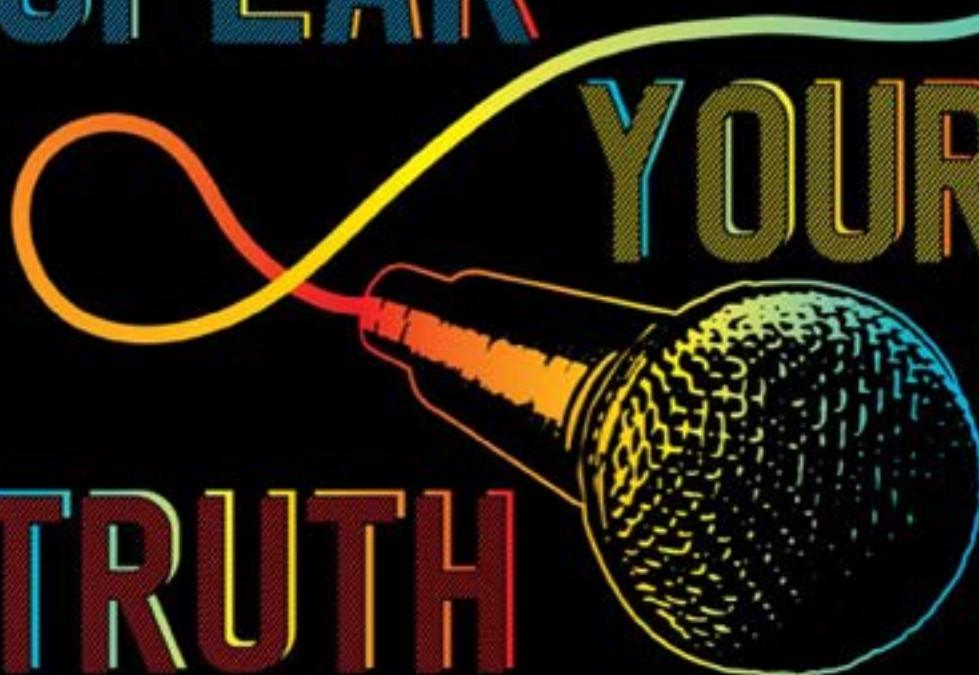
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Marciss Dailey

Made With Hip Hop And Soul

A.G.E.

Marciss Grisby AKA Marciss Dailey, is a rapper straight out of Richmond, CA. He was given his first notebook at the tender age of 8 years old, and he began writing lyrics at the 12. He even recorded his first song in his sophomore year. Even though he comes from a musically inclined family Marciss decided to start playing sports instead, in particular football. Marciss got some scholarship offers, but after his fourth injury he slowly begin to lose his passion for football.

After high school, Marciss attended Pasadena City College, here he had to take a 9 to 5 and begin the pursuit of a dream that he believed his voice could not reach. At 20, Dailey began taking music much more seriously. His grandfather and uncles are a tremendous influence, musically and otherwise. Marciss grew up seeing his uncles producing beats and even rapping themselves. He is heavily influenced by Kendrick, J. Cole, Common, Pac, Lauryn Hill, Mary J. Blidge.

Marciss Dailey remains under contract with A.G.E. and is currently in production with his sophomore work "A complicated Struggle". A "ode" to his freshman EP "Made with Real Hip Hop & Soul". "Marciss aspires to perfect his craft, and his work ethic is never in question." Rally Reign (Producer A.G.E.) "Marciss Dailey's sound is reminiscent of hip hop that HAD texture, and you definitely don't have to look far to find jewels in the lyrics, I expect great things from this new project" Maurice X (Implicit Magazine).

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